

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 17, 2004. Claims 62 to 64 and 69 to 75 are pending in this application, with Claims 32 to 61 and 65 to 68 having been cancelled, and Claims 73 to 75 having been added. Claims 63, 69 and 71 have been amended. Claims 62, 69 and 73 are in independent form. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 62 to 64 and 69 to 72. Claim 69 has been amended to clarify that the maintenance information includes information concerning the first and second exposure apparatuses, which is not seen to affect the allowability of Claim 69.

In keeping with the Examiner's explanation of reasons for allowance, Applicants have added new independent Claim 73. Specifically, newly-added independent Claim 73 includes first and second manufacturing factories, each having an exposure apparatus and being able to access a database, the database storing maintenance information including status information of the exposure apparatuses. Consequently, independent Claim 73 as added is seen to be in condition for allowance. Claims 74 and 75, which depend on independent Claim 73, and which correspond to allowed Claims 63 and 64, are also seen to be in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, Claims 59 to 61 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,243,377 (Umatate); Claims 32 to 35, 43, 44, 47, 48, 51, 53, 55 and 57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), primarily over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 5,591,299 (Seaton) and U.S. Patent No. 5,311,562 (Palusamy), and with reliance on one or more of the following references for some of these claims: U.S. Patent

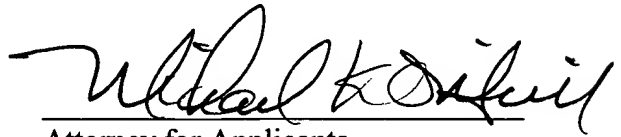
No. 5,245,554 (Tsuyama), U.S. Patent No. 5,761,064 (La), U.S. Patent No. 5,872,915 (Dykes), U.S. Patent No. 6,226,752 (Gupta) and Umatate; Claims 36 to 40, 45, 46, 49, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), primarily over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 4,517,468 (Kemper) and Tsuyama, and with reliance on one or more of the following references for some of these claims: U.S. Patent No. 5,726,920 (Chen), Dykes, Gupta, Palusamy and Umatate; Claims 41 and 42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kemper in view of La; and Claims 65 to 68 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Umatate in view of Dykes. All of the rejected claims, namely Claims 32 to 61 and 65 to 68, have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter and without conceding the correctness of their rejections. Reconsideration and withdrawal are respectfully requested.

Regarding a formal matter, the PTO has still not acknowledged the Information Disclosure Statement dated November 11, 2003. However, in reviewing that Information Disclosure Statement now, it was noticed for the first time that its attached Form PTO-1449 contained errors. Accordingly, this Amendment is accompanied with a "Submission Of Corrected Form PTO-1449 And Request For Initialed Copy Of Same." Consideration of the art cited in the November 11, 2003 Information Disclosure Statement is respectfully requested. Moreover, in view of the PTO's mix-up of papers filed in this application and papers filed in Application No. 09/988,573 (which is a related divisional), and in keeping with oral assurances from the Examiner in a telephone conversation in April, 2003, the Examiner is respectfully requested to ensure that all art of record in each of this '572 application and the related '573 application is the same.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California, office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael K. O'Neill", is written over a horizontal line.

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